

Amendments to the Claims

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (withdrawn) A system for minimal access soft tissue dilating and retracting and nucleus pulposus excision tools for endoscopic spinal surgery, comprising elements to seek the appropriate trajectory, creation of soft tissue tunnel space, and retractors for the tunnels.

Claims 2-6. (previously withdrawn)

Claim 7. (withdrawn) A system for percutaneous endoscopic spinal surgery comprising:

A first tool having a first circumference;

A second tool having a viewing opening, the viewing opening being hollow and having a second circumference, said second circumference being larger than said first circumference;

A surgical excision tool having a length and a third circumference, said third circumference being smaller than said second circumference;

whereby when said first tool is inserted into an incision, said second tool can be inserted over said first tool via said viewing opening, thereby maintaining and gradually widening the incision and allowing said first tool to be removed through said viewing opening, after which removal said surgical excision tool can be inserted through said viewing opening of said second tool for accomplishing a surgical operation while minimizing trauma to surrounding tissue.

Claim 8. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said first tool is a tapered, spiral end obturator.

Claim 9. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said second tool is a beveled cannulum.

Claim 10. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said second tool is an oval spreader.

Claim 11. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said surgical excision tool is selected from a group consisting of a debriding tool, an abrasive tool, and a hollow shaving tool.

Claim 12. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said surgical excision tool is a flat blade spreader.

Claim 13. (withdrawn) A system for percutaneous endoscopic spinal surgery comprising:

trajectory means for insertion into an incision to maintain the incision;

tunneling means for insertion over said trajectory means to widen the incision, creating a tunnel, said trajectory means being removable through the tunnel;

surgical means for insertion through the tunnel to gain access to tissue and other material upon which surgical operations are to be performed;

whereby after an incision is made in tissue, said trajectory means are inserted into the incision, said tunneling means are then inserted over said trajectory means, said trajectory means are removed through said tunneling means, after which removal said surgical means are inserted through said tunneling means for surgical operations and removal of bone and tissue from the incision.

Claim 14. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said trajectory means includes a tapered spiral-end obturator.

Claim 15. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said tunneling means include a beveled cannulum.

Claim 16. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said tunneling means include an oval spreader.

Claim 17. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said surgical means are selected from a group including a debriding tool, an abrasive tool, and a hollow shaving tool.

Claim 18. (withdrawn) A system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said surgical means include a flat blade spreader.

Claim 19. (new) A system for minimal access soft tissue dilating and retracting and nucleus pulposus excision tools for endoscopic spinal surgery, comprising elements to seek the appropriate trajectory, creation of soft tissue tunnel space, and retractors for the tunnels.

Claim 20. (new) The system of Claim 19, wherein

said element to seek the appropriate trajectory is a first tool having a first circumference; said element for creation of soft tissue tunnel space is a second tool having a viewing opening, said viewing opening being hollow and having a second circumference, said second circumference being larger than said first circumference of said first tool; and

said retractors for the tunnels is a surgical excision tool having a length and a third circumference, said third circumference being smaller than said second circumference; and

whereby when said first tool is inserted into an incision, said second tool can be inserted over said first tool via said viewing opening, thereby maintaining and gradually widening the incision and allowing said first tool to be removed through said viewing opening, after which removal said surgical excision tool can be inserted through said viewing opening of said second tool for accomplishing a surgical operation while minimizing trauma to surrounding tissue.

Claim 21. (new) A system as set forth in claim 20, wherein said first tool is a tapered, spiral end obturator.

Claim 22. (new) A system as set forth in claim 20, wherein said second tool is a beveled cannulum.

Claim 23. (new) A system as set forth in claim 20, wherein said second tool is an oval spreader.

Claim 24. (new) A system as set forth in claim 20, wherein said surgical excision tool is selected from a group consisting of a debriding tool, an abrasive tool, and a hollow shaving tool.

Claim 25. (new) A system as set forth in claim 20, wherein said surgical excision tool is a flat blade spreader.

Claim 26. (new) A system for minimal access soft tissue dilating and retracting and nucleus pulposus excision tools for endoscopic spinal surgery, comprising:

trajectory means for insertion into an incision to maintain the incision;

tunneling means for insertion over said trajectory means to widen the incision, creating a tunnel, said trajectory means being removable through the tunnel;

surgical means for insertion through the tunnel to gain access to tissue and other material upon which surgical operations are to be performed;

whereby after an incision is made in tissue, said trajectory means are inserted into the incision, said tunneling means are then inserted over said trajectory means, said trajectory means are removed through said tunneling means, after which removal said surgical means are inserted through said tunneling means for surgical operations and removal of bone and tissue from the incision.

Claim 27. (new) A system as set forth in claim 26, wherein said trajectory means includes a tapered spiral-end obturator.

Claim 28. (new) A system as set forth in claim 26, wherein said tunneling means include a beveled cannulum.

Claim 29. (new) A system as set forth in claim 26, wherein said tunneling means include an oval spreader.

Claim 30. (new) A system as set forth in claim 26, wherein said surgical means are selected from a group including a debriding tool, an abrasive tool, and a hollow shaving tool.

Claim 31. (new) A system as set forth in claim 26, wherein said surgical means include a flat blade spreader.